

THE COLLEGE BOARD

The College Success Initiative: An Academic Support System for Middle Grades And High School Students

The College Board has launched a three-year effort to develop an integrated support system in mathematics and English language arts for students and teachers in grades 6–12. The system includes content standards and proficiencies, diagnostic assessments, and teacher professional development, with a goal of ensuring that all students—especially those from groups traditionally underrepresented in high-level academic courses—obtain the rich experiences they need in mathematics, reading and writing to prepare for success in college. The focus of the mathematics component of the initiative is on creating conditions whereby *high standards for all* becomes the norm in every school, and on ensuring that middle grades and high school mathematics teachers are armed with the right tools to deliver high quality instruction to every child. The GE Fund has provided major financial support for the development of the mathematics component of the College Success Initiative.

There are three integrated parts of the College Board’s mathematics system:

- A set of standards and proficiencies that reflect the content areas that students need to master in order to build their conceptual understanding in mathematics. These standards focus on the problem-solving and critical thinking skills students need to develop at each grade level, 6-12. They also provide teachers with the content frameworks that will enable them to prepare *all students* for success in mathematics—and ultimately for enrollment and success in college.
- A set of diagnostic progress assessments, created through a framework of integrated assessment design and aligned with the standards and proficiencies, and delivered via a web-based platform. Teachers can use the assessments to identify individual student and classroom-wide strengths and weaknesses in specified topics and strands, and then adapt and refine their instructional strategies accordingly.
- A wide range of teacher professional development experiences, both on-site and web-based, that align with the content and expectations of the standards and proficiencies. The intent of the professional development offerings is to promote classroom behaviors that enable teachers to more effectively do the following:
 - Encourage students to think about high-level math in an analytical way;
 - Help students connect ideas, concepts and learning experiences;
 - Demonstrate learning strategies that help students fully develop their ideas.

The system is currently in the developmental and field-testing phase, and will be ready for national rollout beginning in summer 2004. The College Board will draw on its membership base of more than 4,300 schools, colleges and universities, as well as its wide network of school districts that offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses, as a vehicle for broadly disseminating this system in middle schools and high schools across the nation.